

# The Town Talking

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## Mother Was Agent for CIA

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Mother was a spy.

Mrs. Marjorie Craycraft, 45, of 3910 Randolph lane, Withamsville, says she is "not interested" in accepting a full-time job with the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington.

She presents part of a letter as proof the job was offered, and she has no hesitancy in saying she has worked in Cincinnati for CIA the past 20-odd years. CIA, by law, cannot confirm or deny the identity of any agent.

"I'm going to lead a calm, dull life from now on," she said.

Marjorie is known as a music teacher—piano, accordion, violin, mandolin. Her husband, Leroy, is a carpenter-contractor. They had five sons, one of whom, Kenneth, was killed by accident in the Navy.

None of the children ever knew about their mother. Until now.

"IT STARTED when Leroy went into the Army engineers in WW II," she said. "I had two little boys (Terry, now 25, and Kenneth) and we moved into an apartment on Ballard avenue in Oakley. Living in the same building were three Russians supposedly here to buy machine tools."

Everybody was being nice to these Russians, who were allies then. Ivan, the boss, played a mandolin. Marjorie played a mandolin better. The Russians and Marjorie became friendly.

"Ivan was short and fat and friendly, and he and the others always talked about how they loved this country," she said. "But they had cameras, always cameras, and stacks and stacks of papers, you have no idea."

One day, Marjorie, by this time a familiar neighbor, saw "a paper I was pretty sure I wasn't supposed to see." She took it, and some other papers as samples of what the Russians were doing, and sent them to Washington.

"I got word back right away that the government already knew about Ivan and Sasha and Gnatti," she said. "And they asked me to help watch. I had a car and I began driving the Russians around to where they wanted to visit. I helped them learn English. At the same time, I began studying Russian with recordings. It didn't take long until I knew what they were talking about."

MARJORIE CONFESSES she felt "extremely foolish—like maybe all the suspicions were only in my head," when she first sent word to Washington. But in 1946, all three Russians suddenly were "sent back" to Moscow.

"Lots of other people came here," she said, thumbing through stacks of snapshots with foreign names on the backs. "Ivan and Sasha even returned here in 1952 but they only stayed a month."

Marjorie said almost all her work was as a volunteer, although sometimes she was paid what she termed "a token money."



MRS. MARJORIE CRAYCRAFT

"I would get a phone call or a letter giving me information on where to go and whom to see. I'm just a typical housewife, and there must be thousands like me. I went, and looked, and tried my best to get the information desired, and reported back."

It wasn't quite that easy. Marjorie says she was warned she was "on my own if something happened, and I'd have to take the blame." Very, very seldom did she ever meet another agent.

"I went to Union Terminal one night—in 1956, I think—and met him," she said.

"AS WE CAME OUT, an auto tried to run us down," she said. "The agent threw me out of the way and jumped. It really was close, and it was deliberate. Yes, CIA knows who was driving the car."

Marjorie says her husband knew what she was doing "but never questioned me." She also told her pastor and her insurance man, who is a close friend, just so "somebody would know who, what, why and how" in case something happened to her.

Only way all this turned up was because Marjorie was joking about "family promotions" and mentioned the offer of full-time CIA work. Terry, the oldest, just has been promoted to head of research for Arvin Frequency Devices in Lafayette, Ind., and is designing space equipment for NASA. Carl, who just graduated from Glen Este High, is one of 10 youths (out of 870 in the nation) accepted for the Ford Council in automotive design at Purdue University.

"I sort of lost interest (in the CIA work) after Terry was killed by a truck near his Navy base in New Jersey," she said. That was a trifle over three years ago, and she has done little or nothing since, except be a housewife, mother, and give music lessons.

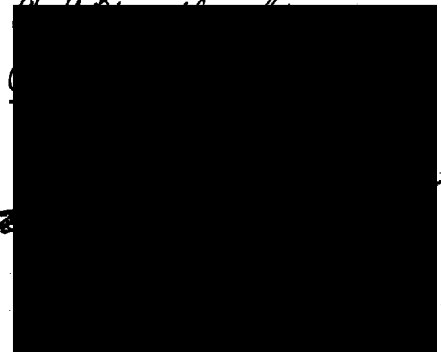
"THAT'S WHY I WAS SURPRISED when the last Washington offer came just two weeks ago," she said. "Leroy said it

was my decision—that he could find something to build up there. But I'm through. Maybe someday I can tell you everything that happened, and the people investigation led us to. It was all fascinating to me, but it's over."

Carl, mystified, fingered through the old photographs and records, and said "I never heard any of this before."

But then, Carl didn't believe his mother ever flew a plane, either, until she pulled out a Withrow High annual and showed him where she helped start the school's first flying club.

Maybe it's mostly Mother's word she was a spy, but she has considerable evidence to prove it.



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